

There's An Art To Love by Hellomynameis_jessica

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Summary:

This takes place a few years after S2. El is now a bit of an artist and this is about the first time they say "I love you" to each other.

There's An Art To Love

Author's Note:

I had been working on this drabble/one-shot for a while, but had scrapped it. I eventually found a reason to finish it, so I hope you enjoy it!

PS: I would recommend listening to the song "Friday I'm In Love" by The Cure since it inspired me to finish this story and you'll see why. But you don't have to if you don't want to.

Mike was so happy that El was back. Well, her real name was now Jane Hopper, after the Chief had taken her in as one of his own. But to Mike Wheeler, she will always be El.

"I can't believe your really back El! I missed you so much." He said to her one day after he had a nightmare that she was gone. He had gone up to hug her as soon as he saw her at the Chief's house.

"I missed you, too, Mike." She said as she returned his hug.

They had started to spend more time now that she was no longer in danger of being a test subject for the federal government again. He tried to visit her as much as he could, even bringing her books and movies and music that he loved so that way she could listen to them when he wasn't there. She loved that he never wanted to leave her alone, even when he was away. It made her heart swell. But she had also decided that she wanted to give him something to keep him company when she was gone, too.

That's when she started to draw.

She had drawn a bit during her time in the lab, and she even had a few of her childhood drawings posted on her wall back in her isolated room. But she soon discovered Bob Ross while channel surfing with her mind, and she felt that he had been a calming force

during her time of need. Slowly, she learned how to draw beautiful pictures of landscapes and of different types of sceneries, especially ones she had never seen before in her isolated life.

When she finally got tired of drawing trees and bodies of water, she asked her new father to take her to the library and checked out about a dozen books related to drawing. She had everything from drawing 101 to history of different art periods and styles. Of course, she loved every minute of it and with time and practice, she started to branch out. She tried her hand in everything. And when she started to feel confident in her work, she gave them to Mike.

“Oh my god, El. You made this?” Mike asked when she had given him her first drawing: a charcoal drawing of the fort blanket she had lived in from the first few days of her freedom.

She looked down, afraid that he wouldn't like her art, especially since it took her several attempts to recreate the scene from memory.

“Do you like it? I know it's know Vermeer or Caravaggio, but this fort is something I hold near and dear to my heart and I thought-“ She was suddenly caught off guard when Mike pressed his lips against hers.

“I love it, El. Never doubt that. Anything you give me, I will cherish it always. Hell, you could have given me a picture of a stick figure with a sun on the side with sunglasses and I would still love it because it came from you.” He said, which made El sigh with relief.

With the passage of time, Mike's room became a sort of pseudo art gallery of El's work, but he didn't mind. He loved every single piece of work she made, and the fact that she made them with him in mind made them even more special. He loved them, but not as much as he loved her.

At first, he didn't really want to make a big deal of it, but one day as he was watching El draw a quick sketch of some bird in the trees behind her new house, he knew. He knew that he loved her, and he knew he had to tell her. He loved the way she stuck her tongue out whenever she got stuck in concentration, he loved the way she would blow the hair that had gotten in her face away, and he especially

loved it when she would wipe her sweat with the back of her hand, not realizing that the charcoal from her pencils had just been smeared across her face. It made him smile and he couldn't believe that he hadn't realized his love for her sooner.

The party, minus El, were all gathered together one day in Mike's basement. El was out of town with Hopper on some business, so he thought that it was a perfect time to ask the boys, and Max, advice on how he should tell El that he loved her. At first, he didn't want to say anything, especially not to them because all they would do is make fun of him and tease him, but he was desperate at this point and he had nothing to lose.

"Ok, so the reason why I called this meeting is because-" Mike was suddenly stopped when Max shushed him.

"We all know why we're here, lover boy. It's so obvious." She said as she took Mike's place standing while pushing him down onto the sofa after she noticed that he was pacing back and forth. She swore that he would have made a hole in the floor if she hadn't stopped him, that's how much he was pacing.

"Uh, y-you do?" He asked, eyes wide.

"Of course! You love El, and you don't know how to tell her." She stated, while looking at the rest of the party, and they all nodded in unison.

"What are you-" He was cut off again when Lucas stood up.

"But is she wrong, Mike?" Lucas asked as he crossed his arms.

"N-no, I guess not."

"Thought so. A woman's intuition is always right." Max said as she brushed invisible dust off her shoulders.

"Oooooooh, our little Mikey is in loooooooooove." Dustin cheered as he grabbed Mike's face and began to kiss his cheeks repeatedly.

This warranted a laugh from the whole group, which only made Mike blush even harder as he tried to push Dustin away. Will, always the quiet one, always the observant one, chimed in.

“Mike, we were talking about this the other day when you and El had snuck off to the library.” Will said as he looked at Mike with a knowing look. Mike blushed even harder while the rest of the party laughed.

“Ok, you guys,” Mike chimed in after the party cooled off a bit, “How should I tell her? What should I do? Should I take her to fancy ass restaurant and tell her over dinner? I have 0 idea, you guys, seriously...” Mike’s leg began to bounce up and down as he began to ramble off to the rest of the group. Everyone was deep in thought when Will, the ever wise one, gasped

“I think I have an idea! It might work, it might not, but it’s an idea that I think she’ll love.” Will said with a satisfied grin as he sat back and crossed his arms.

“Ok, Will the Wise, spill the beans, we don’t have all day,” Dustin said as he slapped Will on the shoulder, “Out with it!”

“OK, OK, jeez, you don’t have to hit me.” Will said as he rubbed the back of his shoulder, “Well, I was thinking that maybe you could build a blanket fort for her maybe here or at her house, and maybe make her her favorite meal, and then as desert maybe you can make your own custom Eggo waffles with as many toppings as you can. And then, once you’re finished with that, you can watch a romantic movie or put on a mixtape of songs that remind you of her. That last part is up to you.”

Mike was nodding his head, before he turned to Will and smiled.

“Will, you definitely are the wise one of the group! Why didn’t I think of that?”

It had been a week since Mike had met up with the party to talk about his plan, and after the meeting, he couldn’t help but feel a bit

more confident about his love for El. Once he realized that he loved her with every fiber of his being, he never once doubted it.

So there he was on a Friday night, preparing the blanket fort, the dinner, and the dessert he had planned with the party. Lucky for him, his parents and his sister were leaving for the weekend since they had bought tickets to a show that Holly had wanted to see in Chicago, so that meant he had the house to himself.

Mike had settled on making breakfast for dinner, since he knew that El loved breakfast, especially when it involved Eggos. He made scrambled eggs with cheese, bacon, sausage and decided he would make fresh squeezed orange juice. It took him a while to make the orange juice, but he eventually managed to make about 3/4 of a pitcher full of it after squeezing countless oranges.

El loved it. She couldn't believe that Mike had decided to make her breakfast for dinner and they both gorged themselves on as much food as they could. She especially had fun when Mike brought out the Eggos, along with the toppings he had decided on; cherries, whipped cream, chocolate syrup, regular syrup, sprinkles, chocolate chips, strawberries, jelly, peanut butter, etc. El was over the moon as she created a mountain of sugary, waffle goodness, making sure she added as many of the toppings as she could. They both sat there eating their dessert and laughing at each other whenever they got anything on their face, or when one of them would talk with their mouth full of food.

Once they were done eating, Mike took her down to his basement where he showed her the blanket fort that he had made her. It was similar to the one she had lived in a few years back when she first met Mike, but only this time it was a lot bigger, spreading almost throughout the room. He had put about 5 layers of comforters on the floor so when they went to lay down after Mike had put a movie on, they were completely comfortable. He had decided to put on "The Outsiders" since it was one of his favorite movies and, to his shock, El had never seen it.

"I've known El for years now, and I haven't shown her my favorite movie? What kind of stupid boyfriend does that?" Mike thought as he mentally face-palmed.

They were deep into the movie that by the end, El was sniffing. She was trying to desperately hide her tears from Mike, but he grabbed her face and wiped her tears for her before placing a kiss to her lips. She sighed contently into the kiss before Mike placed his forehead to hers. He still held her face in his hands as he looked her deep in her eyes.

“I love you, El.” Mike whispered before pressing a light kiss to her forehead.

El began to cry again, but not because of the movie. She was crying because here she was, her head in Mike’s hands, feeling so happy that she was far from the girl who had lived in his basement years ago. The girl that was once scared of everyone and everything, the one had never once felt an ounce of love, was sitting now with the love of her life as he was telling her that he loved her for the first time. She knew she loved him a long time ago, she wasn’t sure when exactly it happened, but once she realized that she did, she knew that she would be OK as long as she had Mike by her side. She also knew that he loved her, because although he hadn’t said it before, he showed her that he did. He showed her when he would hug her, when he would kiss her, or even when he would bring over books, movies, mixtapes that he loved. She knew, and that was when she had decided to start drawing. It was so that way she could give him a piece of what she loved, just like he had done for her.

It was El this time that pressed her lips to his, making sure she poured every ounce of love she had for him into that one kiss. She eventually pulled away first and put her lips right next to his ear.

“I know, Mike. You always made sure of that,” she whispered, “And I want you to know that I love you, too.”

It was Mike’s turn to cry.

Author's Note:

If there are any grammatical errors, please try to ignore them as I wrote this on my phone at like midnight.